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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE ALUMNI AND GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,

ON THE AFTERNOON PRECEDING

Commencement Day,

IN GERARD HALL, JUNE 26, 1839.

BY HUGH McQUEEN.

RALEIGH:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE RALEIGH REGISTER.

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1839.

Philanthropic Hall, August 18th, 1839.

DEAR SIR:—At a meeting of the Philanthropic Society, held on the 17th inst. the following Resolution was unanimously adopted:

“*Resolved*, That the Committee of Correspondence be instructed to tender the thanks of this Society to HUGH McQUEEN, Esquire, for the highly eloquent and appropriate Address delivered before the Alumni and Graduating Class, on the evening preceding Commencement, and request a copy of the same for publication.”

In complying with the instruction of our Society, permit us to express the gratification we experienced during its delivery, and respectfully to add our own solicitations to those of the Society.

Yours, respectfully,

DANL. L. KENAN,
DAVID A. BARNES, } Committee.
WM. F. DANCY.

Hugh McQueen, Esq.

Raleigh, August 24, 1839.

GENTLEMEN:—I have just received your polite communication of the 18th inst. in which I am requested to provide you with a copy of the Address which was delivered before the Alumni and Graduating Class of the University of this State, on the evening preceding Commencement Day; and should have promptly replied to it, had I not been suddenly called from home by an imperious obligation of duty, and detained for a length of time beyond my original expectations. I can now assure you, however, that I feel a very unaffected degree of hesitancy in yielding to the stern criticism of the public, a production which was prepared in an interval of time, greatly too brief to afford the measure of mature reflection and of patient research, which was prescribed by the importance of the duty.

As I was influenced, however, in accepting the appointment, by no other motive than that of an ardent desire to accomplish the wishes of the Society, it would not become me, at this point of time, to obstruct the fulfilment of its desires, when expressed on a different branch of the same subject. If, then, you should be impressed with the conviction that even a partial measure of good may flow from the publication of the Address, it is resigned to your discretion, with its numerous and varied imperfections. And permit me, through you, to make an offering to the Philanthropic Society of the lively and profound sensibility which I have experienced in the approving sentence which it has kindly passed upon my imperfect attempt in its service. And accept, Gentlemen, for yourselves, the assurance of my most cordial gratitude and regard for the gratifying manner in which you have performed your duty.

HUGH McQUEEN.

Messrs. D. L. Kenan, D. A. Barnes, W. F. Dancy, Committee, &c.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN ALUMNI OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA:

It is a task of fearful magnitude and of startling responsibility, to climb that perilous and sacred mount, where the seers of Literature have hitherto stood—and from its bright and lofty summit, to take a glimpse of the landscape of promise, and to deliver to an assembly of exquisite taste, polished elegance and varied attainments, those maxims of conduct, an implicit obedience to which will lead the devout enquirer to the heart of its flowery and enchanting domain. This is a duty, from the painful responsibilities of which, I most devoutly sought a deliverance, with the fond and animating hope, that the generous confidence of youth and the severe judgment of maturity, would have been each rewarded for its attendance here, in the sweets of a banquet prepared and adjusted by a master's hand. In this pleasing expectation, we have been mournfully disappointed; and that interesting picture, which was to have received its mixture of lights and of shades, its touches of grandeur and of elegance, from the vivid pencil of some Literary Appelles, who might snatch the loveliest tints from every chosen flower of literature, and blend them in one harmonious system of beauty, for the gratification of every beholder, has been delineated by a mere apprentice at the shrine of the Muses. But it has been recorded in the sublime charter of our immortal faith, that the farthing which dropped from the sincere beneficence of the upright heart and pure, was sanctified by the humility of the offering—that it is purity of heart which lends its loveliest hue to the robe of angel brightness, and that it is purity of

heart which imparts its sweetest note to the song of seraph rapture, amid the abodes of celestial bliss. If then, the cup of cold water, which is now presented for your refreshment by an humble soldier in the army of letters, may be appreciated for the unmingled sincerity of heart which has dictated the offering, your critical severity will be disarmed of its terrors, and the trembling imperfections of the speaker, will find a soothing absolution in your generous charities. For I have ascended this holy eminence, which has been consecrated by the service of God and of Science, by the ministrations of religion and of letters, to offer the oblation of an affectionate heart at the shrine of youthful friendship, and to plead with humble, but with fearless confidence, for the best interests of our father-land.

Many of you have disrobed yourselves for a brief interval, of the coarse livery of customary labors and pursuits, and have deserted, for the prosecution of holier objects, that wide domain which is occupied by the cares of earth and of sense, the concerns of flesh and of blood. You have assembled here to cheer, by your presence, our young friends, in the first scene of practical life, which is now opening rapidly upon them—to paint in fresh colors upon the page of memory, those incidents of the past which have now grown dim with age, and to invoke the benedictions of the presiding genius of America upon the intellectual interests of our race. And the sun, in his beneficent course, has never yet poured his genial and resplendent beams upon a more sublime and beautiful spectacle, than collective man, dedicating the fervid flow of his feelings and the intense action of his thoughts, to the promotion of intelligence and virtue. This is a scene upon which angels may smile with complacency from their blissful heights in the skies, and around which the shades of the sainted founders of this Temple of Science will hover with a measure of sacred solicitude and affection. More especially, does the sanctity of the scene which is now passing away, require

a broad page in the history of life on which to record the touching incidents of the past which it so forcibly revives. The shadows of departed time arise as thick as the shadows of evening, to vindicate the honor of the place. The dimly remembered forms and faces of youthful friends, long since dispersed and scattered over different climes and countries, start up amid these solemn shades, to claim afresh that space in your hearts, which they filled in the seasons which are gone; and, what is yet more touching to the sympathies of the soul, the marred images of those engaging youths, who sunk to the grave amid the labors of this institution, arise from the coverts of the past, and implore at your hands the tribute of a sigh, for the joys which they once communicated to your bosoms. They solicit from you the tear of silent sympathy, to moisten the narrow cell which guards their peaceful dust, and the flower of affection to deck the sinking mound which marks the spot of their long repose. Go, then, to yon City of Silence, where some of your departed associates have taken up their abode forever—Go, read the compendious legend of the tomb—Go, see the crumbling enclosure, the matted grass, and the mouldering marble, and catch from these mournful emblems of mortal decay, a spirit of pathos, which will soften your affections and purify the springs of sublunary care from all the dregs of earth and of time. Is there something too effeminate, too delicate and poetic in these sacred gushes of sensibility, for the stoutness of a masculine heart? Look at the conqueror of Napoleon, who, after the bird of victory had perched upon the standard of Britain, surrendered his heroic bosom to the soft palpitations of grief, and sprinkled the field of the slain with a hero's tears. Look at the Prince of Roman Eloquence, who, fired with the glowing raptures of enthusiasm, by the splendid intellectual achievements which had crowned the labors of Archimedes, wandered through brushwood and brambles, in search

of the grave of that giant martyr in the cause of science, and shed the tears of ecstacy over his tomb.

Yes, the utilitarian spirit of the age may deery every delicate sentiment which never crosses the narrow circle of its own sordid avocations; but there is, yet, a spirit of locality, which reproduces upon the tablets of the human heart, in all their freshness, the faded images of the past, which rekindles in the sobered heart of age, the glowing fires of youth, which freshens up the beating pulses of animation and of life, in that heart which has long been the refuge of sorrow, of care and of heaviness, and which elevates the soul upon the wing of fancy, to realms beyond the ken of mortal vision. Buffon was alive to the reality of this sentiment, when composing his enchanting book of Nature—Gibbon felt it, in all its force, when framing his luminous pages on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire—Byron was transported by its power, when lingering among the broken columns and other perishing traces of Attic glory, and every susceptible and expansive heart is warmed by its genial fervor, on renewing its acquaintance with any scene of former glory or of former associations. The magic power of local association, by the force of its creative touch, has summoned into existence many of the most brilliant achievements in arms which have ever yet convulsed the globe—many of the most enchanting productions in fiction, which have ever yet beguiled the hours of leisure, and many of the most fascinating numbers in verse, which have ever yet glowed among the printed treasures of the world.

The celebrated Alexander Pope has long consecrated, in the estimation of genius, the chamber in which he completed one of his most admired productions, by scratching with the point of a diamond, on a pane in one of its windows, the inscription, "In the year 1718, Alexander Pope completed here the fifth volume of Homer." This illustrious bard, too, felt that fresh powers of creation were imparted to his imagination, by pacing over the garret in which Mr. Addison had

completed one of his most accepted works: and thousands of susceptible minds have caught the glow of inspiration, in surveying the natal scene of the Bard of Avon, and in passing through the gloomy passages of Westminster Abbey, where repose the buried glories of Britain.

Why is it, that a sprig, taken from the sequestered grave of the exile of St. Helena, with more than historic force, brings into living play all the illustrious associations connected with the life and fortunes of that astonishing man?—Why is it, that a fragment of marble, taken from the pillars of the Colliseum, delineates to the cultivated imagination, in vivid hues, all the storied scenes of classic renown? Why is it, that the most trifling relic from the tomb of a country's buried love, recalls, in all the affluence of their splendour and power of effect, the august train of incidents which adorn the pages of our Revolutionary history? Why is it, that the native of Switzerland, when he once catches the passion for home, pines and droops and languishes until he is favoured with a glimpse of the romantic vales, chrystal lakes and Alpine heights, which variegate the surface of his country? And why is it, that the pilgrim passes over, with pleasure and alacrity, mountains, whose towering summits pierce the skies, and perilous streams and parching sands and pathless deserts, to catch a glimpse of that spot which was once honored with the custody of a Saviour's bones? It is the force of local association—it is this potent spring in the system of man, which has frequently given life and complexion and tone to the most beneficent designs which have ever yet burst in splendid consummation upon the world.

It has been recorded by an eminent writer, with an implicit conviction of the truth of the remark, that there is no human being who ever feels, in the course of life's feverish and eventful journey, that he has any home but one, and that is where nature arose to his vision blushing with the roses of life's earliest morn.

Between the home of infancy, and the heart of virtue, the curtain of oblivion shall never fall. Its incidents, its scenery, its associations, are imprinted upon the pages of memory in characters which shall never fade. Oceans and trackless deserts may intervene; grief and care and disappointment may waste away and finally exhaust the native buoyancy of the spirit; we may take the wings of the morning and fly to Greenland's icy mountains, to Afric's burning sands, and to Asia's farthest bounds; but the memory of that spot, where the ear drank in the earliest music of affection, where the heart vibrated with the first thrill of sensibility and delight, and where the young imagination received its first and liveliest tints, shall never sink behind the hills of the past.

If then, the home which afforded shelter and nourishment to man's physical system in the weakness of infancy; if those scenes of glory which are the boast of distant lands, and if inanimate relics, which point to the deeds of departed heroes and sages, are calculated to wrap the fancy in the flames of inspiration, how enduring should be the charms which hang upon that sacred spot where the immortal intellect first received its vigor, its beauty and its richness? With what tender and solemn emotions, should you traverse the Halls in which you first shared in the salutary communion of Science and of Literature? With what thrilling sensibility, should you pass under the shade of those venerable Oaks which once afforded you a peaceful and refreshing retreat in your classic and scientific researches? With what subdued and softened feelings, should you pass over the lawns, the rivulets and the walks, which once relaxed the severity of your youthful studies; and with what heaving bosoms should you read upon the crumbling bark of surrounding trees, and upon the fading walls of familiar tenements, the inscription of many honored names, which have long been transferred to the roll of mortality?

Edmund Burke has remarked, somewhere in his rich and glowing pages, that the affections of the human heart should resign their grasp upon the interests of the world, at least one day in each returning week, for the purpose of yielding it up to the sublimating power of celestial thoughts and influences. Is it not, then, upon the same principle, in some degree obligatory upon you, to come up once in each returning year, to this maternal fountain of nourishment, from which you drew the elements of manly usefulness, elegance and vigor, for the purpose of casting off the gross and selfish cares of life, to mingle your thoughts with the incidents of departed years, to pay your adorations at the altar of Science and Letters and the Muses, and to return to the bustling scenes of life, strongly imbued with the spirit of the place?

But it is not merely to partake of the luxurious sensations which are inspired by the atmosphere of poetry and sentiment, that your presence is frequently demanded here. Your vigilant and tender care is annually solicited here by objects which are intimately connected with the real business and substantial interests of life. Your attendance here is strenuously and imperiously enjoined by a fond respect for your juvenile brethren in the race of learning. The approving smiles of the intelligent and the refined, of the lovely, the delicate and the beautiful, are the keenest, the most active and effective incentives which spur them on to diligence and virtue. For these they toil, and for these they forego the repose of their nights, and for these they resign, without a murmur, the gay recreations of their days; and if it were not for these grand spurs to action, the stream of their exertions would flow in a sluggish and languid current. When they are annually honored by the presence of those who preceded them in the course of Collegiate instruction, they are confirmed in the belief that all the costly appliances of Education, which have been deposited here by the patriotic beneficence of the public, are something more than an empty

pageant—that the annual investigation of their acquisitions in knowledge, is something more than a solemn farce. They are thus inspired with the indelible conviction, that these things are closely interwoven with their prosperity and felicity in the scenes of practical life; for they see those who have been heretofore trained beneath the peaceful covert of this devoted sanctuary of learning, and who have gone forth and participated in the trying struggles of life, confessing in a solemn and imposing manner, by their annual visits to this place, that there is a sovereign and indispensable efficacy in the system of mental discipline practised here.

The votaries of Religion are buoyed up and animated, at their periodical festivals, by the presence of the congregated thousands, who assemble from all parts to witness with hallowed interest and subdued feelings, the touching ceremonies by which is commemorated the benefit of eternal salvation. Is it not equally natural to expect, that the young cultivators of Science and Letters will be strengthened and encouraged by the presence of those, who have gone before them in the march of Collegiate exertion? Even at the earlier period in the history of our race, the more honorable demonstrations of youthful excellence were publicly rewarded by the highest and most flattering tokens of the public esteem. And it has been often observed by those, who are in the habit of marking the progress of causes and effects in the department of Literary action, that the energy, ambition and usefulness of the Graduates who annually emerge from the South-Carolina College, are powerfully enhanced by the imposing situation of that University, and by the circumstance of its annual Commencements taking place simultaneously with the meetings of the State Legislature. The generous Student is there encouraged to a vigorous exercise of his powers, by a knowledge of the fact, that his faithfulness to the delicate trust committed to his charge by the hand of parental affection, will be publicly made known to men of celebrity and distine-

tion, and to those fair and blooming sentinels which the mercy of Heaven has placed on the watch-towers of learning, to cheer and stimulate him onward, when standing upon the threshold of a glorious career. Under these circumstances, he is at once introduced to the knowledge and notice of every portion of the State: and to this cause has been principally ascribed the degree of superiority which has been manifested in the National Councils, by that public-spirited and patriotic member of the Confederacy, as compared with North-Carolina.

Here, it frequently happens, that the Student has exerted himself to the topmost pitch of his strength to attract the applause of a generous audience—he may indulge in an active round of preparations to minister to its gratification—he may distinguish himself by a career of untarnished virtue—he may bear away the palm of scholarship in his class, and in the noble exercises of writing and speaking—and the want of an assembly, which might be enlightened in point of intelligence and respectable in point of numbers and moral worth, to encourage him by its approving smiles, causes his noble emulation to sicken and languish and expire. The Commencements of Harvard and of Yale are the most imposing celebrations which occur in the Eastern States, and this circumstance unquestionably exerts a salutary and improving influence over the Literary interests of that department of the Union. Literature, among our brethren of the North, is encouraged, promoted and sustained by the conservative principle of Literary Societies and Conventions, which are constantly in motion. The flame of zeal on this important branch of the public interests can consequently never flicker in its socket, nor completely expire in such an atmosphere. It will continue to spread into a blaze of brighter and more commanding lustre, as long as the pillars of the Republic shall stand.

There is scarcely any enterprize on earth, which is considered worthy of the interest of a free people, but lifts its drooping crest and rises to a lofty height of prosperity, beneath the genial influence of associated effort. The sacred counsels of wisdom and of peace, which are to sooth the expiring bosom, and to raise the emancipated spirit to realms of eternal light, are propagated and planted under the benign wing of associated effort. Do you wish to establish a Road, to cut a Canal, or to open some stream, which is to bear upon its generous bosom the precious fruit of a farmer's annual toils? The laudable undertaking must be accomplished by the resistless force of associated effort. Yes, the Chief Magistrates of the nation are elevated to their high places, and hurled thence again—candidates for popular favor and distinction are raised to general acceptance and effectually put down—Banking and other commercial institutions are established and signally prostrated—the cause of Temperance, and of every other cause within the expanded range of human thought and of human care, are both advanced and depressed by the efficacious influence of public meetings, conventions and associations. Is it expected, that Science and Literature and Education, are to form exceptions to the extended catalogue of human interests, and force their way to solid strength and permanent prosperity without other assistance than such as may flow from their own superlative and persuasive excellence? This appears to be the reigning sentiment of the public, at least in North-Carolina. For where is there within the limits of this State, the voluntary association of individuals, permanent in its character, fervid in its spirit, and active in its exertions, which has been constituted and organized for the avowed purpose of fostering the interests of Education, or of any one branch of general Science or Literature. Very true, you have had Historical Societies and Literary Institutions, and other Education Societies, with titles as long and imposing as the Dutchman's name—the

superscription of which occupied more of the paper than the letters which were directed to him. But where are those associations? Transient as the vernal shower, and fleeting as the dew of morning, they have faded from the roll of living things, and belong to the records of the past. No association of practical service to the interests of Literature and Science now exists in the State of North-Carolina: no public spirited Society, which might serve to hedge in by its active and beneficent care, the sensitive and fragrant flowers of genius which spring up within our borders; which might serve to incite matured intelligence to active operation for the public good; which might stimulate youthful talent to essay the strength of its early pinions; which might preserve from oblivion many interesting facts and productions which are occasionally elicited in the intercourse and operations of life, and which might disseminate extensively among the people, such literary documents and productions as would renovate the aspect of letters in this department of the Union, and convert our present dreary surface into a Literary Arcadia. It is by a communion of counsels, sympathy of feelings, and unity of action, that Science, Literature and general Education, must be prospered and advanced like every other pursuit in life. What means within the range of man's powers of invention, would tend more largely to give fresh impulse to the cause of Literature and Education in this State—to impart a new complexion, tone and character to public feeling, than a Society organized at some point within her comprehensive borders, whose professed object should be to encourage and expand these inestimable interests? To such an association would be presented, a broad, productive and inviting field, in which to accomplish solid and durable benefits for its country, and to accumulate laurels of imperishable verdure to adorn its own brow. It might rescue from the grave of oblivion, many precious facts connected with the history of the State, which

will soon be irrecoverably lost. It might impart conclusive information to the world, respecting incidents of a Revolutionary character, which are intimately associated with the glory of the State. It might forever tear away from the public fame of some of her darling and patriotic sons, that thin veil of uncertainty and doubt, which has been woven by the fingers of a malicious and satanic jealousy. At its annual meetings, it might also set apart questions in general Science and Literature, with a view to draw forth from their living repositories, those choice treasures and beneficent lights, the hoarding up of which consumed many years and much treasure. It might too select topics of general interest in the department of Education, for the purpose of eliciting public Addresses and private dissertations from its members. It might institute a correspondence with the Literary Societies of other Countries and States, and it might receive and disseminate such information at home, as would fan into a flame of inextinguishable and commanding splendour, the present smothered embers of Literary ardour.—Temples dedicated to Science would raise their bright spires to heaven, on scenes now shaded by the growth of the forest and by the miserable hovel—the passions of the age would be meliorated and softened, the feelings of the people would be chastened and enlarged, and our manners and languages polished and refined.

The tie of association wields a creative power and influence by the continually circulated sympathies of its members—a reciprocity of Literary favors and benefits is established among the members of such a Society, which never would have existed under any other circumstances—a benevolent collision of intellectual powers is thus produced which arouses the torpid from their lethargy—which encourages the diffident to action—which attracts the secluded votary of letters from the cell of his retirement, to diffuse his intellectual resources over the land, for the good and glory

of his country, and which preserves for the benefit of the passing and of future generations, those illuminating suggestions which frequently fall from the lips of men of genius, in the glow of the passing moment, and which would be otherwise consigned to perish without leaving a perceptible trace behind them.

The Royal Society of London, in the splendour and value of its contributions to the Literature and Science of Britain, and in the imperishable celebrity of its members, has raised a monument to perpetuate the glory of its character, which will outlive the pyramids of Egypt, and survive the wreck of the most stupendous fabrics which royal munificence has erected. Yet, was its origin so humble and secure, as scarcely to excite observation. The French Royal Academy of Sciences, which has communicated the warmth of the genial beams of knowledge to distant shores and countries, was indebted for its birth, to an accidental meeting of private individuals which occurred at a public inn in Paris. The Royal Society of Antiquaries in London, which has separated from the useless lumber of the times, so many of the most precious fragments of the Literature of past ages, was so insignificant in its earlier labors, as neither to merit nor receive even the smallest share of the public attention. There are also Literary Societies in many of the States of this Confederacy, which have powerfully contributed to elevate and adorn the character of American Literature, and which, like the foreign associations just referred to, had almost imperceptible beginnings. But they have continued to grow and strengthen, enlarging the circumference of their usefulness and influence, whilst years were passing away, until they have provided a tower of strength for the interests of Science and Literature, upon which the waves of popular prejudice and the sordid and selfish passions of mankind have wasted their energies in vain. They have ushered wonders into the world, at the first appearance of which, the young

and inexperienced stripling in Literature shrieks back with the same sensations of amazement, with which the inhabitant of our Western forests starts back at the first view of the Ocean.

In this State, there are citizens whose attainments would have reflected lustre on the reputation of any age or any country; but because there is no common purpose, object, or interest, to draw them together in one solid mass, where their views could be exchanged and compared, their literary experience revealed, and the interesting facts in their possession made known to each other and to the world, we are exposed to the humiliating charge of being afflicted with a literary pauperism. If the accomplished sons of North-Carolina could be brought together, at stated periods, by an imperious sense of interest or of duty, or by the patriotic ties of fraternal association, the character of the State would be elevated both at home and abroad: for the fact would be clearly demonstrated to ourselves and to the world, by the labors and productions of our citizens, that this State was not the Arabia Deserta of polished intelligence; but that it was, on the contrary, a land in which the sweetest flowers of Literature might bloom, and where its most delicious and inviting fruits might be reared to perfection.

The war of the Revolution, by bringing the intellectual giants of the country together at the different points of legislative deliberation, raised the character of the United States for eloquence and ability in the councils of peaceful wisdom, as high as it did for deeds of heroism and hardihood in the field of martial strife. Britain and other foreign nations were not alone astonished at the brilliant Speeches and other productions of American Statesmen, who were drawn together from the different parts and extremities of the Union by the magnet of common perils and common interests, at one central point of deliberation. The people of this country were themselves amazed at the sudden revelation of intellectual

resources which had been formerly hedged in by State lines and exerted within the retired shades of local theatres. Thus it is with the literary talents and acquirements of North-Carolina. The profound learning, elegant and diversified attainments and correct taste of her enlightened sons, are now hid in the depths of retired life, buried under the mass of professional engagements, and scattered in isolated and unconnected spots over the broad surface of the State, rendered inefficient and unproductive by the want of some potent impetus to bring them into vigorous play. Provide that impetus, and the tree of literature will bud and blossom like the vernal rose; its richly flavored fruit will be suspended from its healthful branches, in luxurious and inviting clusters, for the benefit and gratification of her own sons—and her character will emerge into an enviable notoriety from the darkness which now hovers over it, like an Elysian landscape after the shades of night have been dissipated by the blushing splendours of the morning sun.

Upon whom can the holy task of building up these sacred interests in this State, by the efficacious charm of combined exertion, more appropriately devolve, than upon those of her sons who have participated in the fostering care and in the highest honors which flow from this Institution—a Seminary, which has been established and sustained through all the vicissitudes of fortune, by the watchful solicitude and partial munificence of the State? How could the ALUMNI of this Institution illustrate their own public spirit in a more conspicuous and impressive manner? How could they possibly apply the intellectual treasures which they have borne away from this Institution, to a nobler and more hallowed purpose? How could they make a more splendid return to the public for the benefits which they have derived from the endowments of this University? And in what way, could they manifest the affection which they cherish for the scene of their early labors and associations, in a more honor-

able and imposing manner, than by forming an association which should annually convene at this place, for the avowed purpose of watching over and promoting the literature of the State?

The veterans of the American Revolution, after the circle of our liberties had been completed by the successful conclusion of that ever memorable struggle, were sensibly affected at the thought of the sudden severance of those ties which had been formed and cemented by a long association in common hardships, sacrifices and dangers, and for the purpose of periodically reviving their heroic sympathies with each other, and of preserving that correspondence of affection which would result from the efficacious power of an occasional intercourse, they established the society of the Cincinnati. But notwithstanding the object they had in view was equally sanctified by the sacredness of the purpose upon which it was founded, and by the hallowed pleasures which were communicated to the war-worn bosom, by the occasional meetings which they held, these tried and accepted patriots were severely censured by a rigid, if not fastidious spirit of Republicanism, for the establishment of an association which drew a broad line of separation between the Military and Civil professions, and for that principle of exclusiveness which entered as a prominent ingredient into the essence of its constitution.

Against the force of such an objection as this, the Alumni of this University might studiously guard any association which may be hereafter formed by them, by inserting in the code of its regulations, an article, which would render admissible by the consent of a majority of its members, any distinguished citizen of this or of other States, whose moral character, literary qualifications and general reputation, might promise an accession of strength to the body.

And where, permit me to inquire, is there any locality in this State more admirably suited to the labors and delibera-

tions of such an assembly, than the theatre of your early intellectual struggles. It arises to the judgment invested with a combination of attractive circumstances, to which no other situation in this State can make the remotest pretensions.—For it has been already dedicated in a solemn manner to the guardianship and advancement of the best interests of literature, and the Society proposed would only tend to consummate and expand the grand designs for which the University itself was originally called into being. This Institution is withdrawn from the bustle of active life, and presents to the philosophic eye, one spot of verdant repose, one peaceful and serene abode, which is neither poisoned by the sordid passions and selfish cares of the world, nor molested by the boisterous vociferations, the jarring interests and maddening strifes which pervade the circle of political contention. Here, the tree of knowledge may be hedged in by a strong and impassable enclosure, and may grow and extend its branches in security and in strength, for the benefit of all who may hunger for its fruit or pant for its shade. And this secluded spot, by being converted into a metropolis of letters, will become the most attractive circle in the community.

The obscure and unfrequented situation of this place, which has proved a prolific source of numerous exceptions to it as a theatre of youthful education, may prove eminently auspicious to the preservation of our language and literature in their primitive purity. Here, the pure stream of scholastic reflection is seldom poisoned by the noxious exhalations which frequently arise from the troubled pool of party politics, in a more public sphere. And here, the current of speech is, in some degree, liberated from those varied corruptions which are frequently imparted to language by a promiscuous communion with men in early life. In this calm circle, undisturbed by the din of surrounding multitudes, and unengaged by the fascinating gaieties, amusements and exhibitions which are furnished in pernicious profusion by crowded cities,

the young aspirant after the beauties of language is compelled, in self defence, to draw the elements of speech from the works of authors whose claim to respect has been sanctioned both by the reverend sages of antiquity, and by the accomplished disciples, who have trod with devotion in the path which their taste and wisdom have prescribed. And when he retires from a converse with books, he must then mingle in conversation with those who have drawn their resources of speech from the same approved sources, around which he has himself lingered with delight.

We are presented in the history of the world, with many impressive facts which tend to illustrate the almost miraculous extent to which the language of nations may be preserved pure and inviolate, by the advantages of a circumscribed and isolated situation. The Gaelic tongue, which constituted the dialect of the ancient Gauls at the earliest period of their existence, is still spoken in the Highlands of Scotland in its undulterated form, whilst in France, and in other countries where it formerly sustained the blessing of social intercourse, it has been so largely corrupted by a mixture with the languages of other nations, as to have lost its identity. To what circumstance are we to ascribe this singular phenomenon? We are to attribute it exclusively to the slender share of intercourse with the rest of the human race, which has been enjoyed by this sturdy and simple-hearted people. There are two Cantons of Switzerland, in the one of which yet prevails the *Romaunsch*, a dialect which was spoken in the Roman Empire during the ruder periods of its existence; and in the other of which, is still retained in its primitive mould, the *Ladin*, a dialect which was used by the Roman people at a more advanced stage of their cultivation and glory. Yes, these languages respectively exist in the departments which have just been referred to, without having received any perceptible tinge or colouring from the languages of surrounding countries, whilst, if they ever had an

existence in the other provinces of Switzerland, they have faded and fallen away, have been buried under the cumbrous mass of foreign mixtures. What is the cause of this singular circumstance? It has resulted from the fact that these divisions of the country are separated from the other provinces by lofty mountains, frowning glaciers, and fathomless lakes. The Christian Religion, planted on the coast of Malabar at an early period, has been preserved in the original purity of its substance and ceremonies, whilst centuries have been passing away, and when surrounding nations have, at the the same time, been steeped in the monstrous and ridiculous fooleries which are incorporated with the Pagan and Mahometan systems of Mythology. This interesting fact in the history of the Christian Religion is explained, too, by the secluded situation of this peculiarly fated people.

May you not, then, amid the silent shades of this sequestered spot, sow the seeds of Literature in peace, and reap a pure and plentiful harvest from your labors? You may here open a fountain which will be sheltered from every species of profanation by the privacy and by the sacred nature of the place. You may, from this consecrated ground, send forth a healthful stream of knowledge, which will revive the languishing prospects of letters in every portion of this wide spread community. In the quietude of this haven of repose, your labors for the improvement of your species and your country, will bear a strong and impressive resemblance to those sacred rites which were consummated by the Priests of antiquity, amid the silence of sequestered groves.

But, Gentlemen, your labors ought not to be suspended even at the attainment of this important point. The closing testimonial which you received from the authorities of this Institution, like the wizzard ring which was presented to a juvenile friend by an oriental sage, should spur you on to vigorous and unrivalled exertions in behalf of the prosperity of your *Alma Mater*. It is expected of every confirmed

votary of Religion, and of every warm partizan in Politics, to embark with ardent zeal in the cause of the denominations and parties to which they are respectively attached; to stretch out their arms and to elevate the note of persuasion to its most exalted pitch, for the purpose of attracting proselytes to their favorite doctrines. Why may we not, with equal confidence, expect those who have derived the bone and muscle of their intellectual power, together with the ornamental finish which renders that power engaging to the world, from the salutary training of this University, to arise from their criminal repose and plead its cause before the bar of the country, with that fervid enthusiasm with which the pilgrim pleads for admittance into the Holy City of his contemplated devotions? Does it not become the enlightened Graduates of this Institution, to rekindle the vestiges of youthful affection which yet linger in their bosoms, by "praying for the peace of Jerusalem," and by constantly expressing, in the daily actions of their lives, that sacred sentiment of inspired devotion, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces; for my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, peace be within thee?"

You should repair to the field of service, invested with an armour prepared and strengthened by the sacredness of the cause in which you will be engaged, and with bosoms animated by the dauntless intrepidity of a Spartan band, and by that enthusiastic ardor which is kindled in the heart of the soldier of the Cross, when he sees liberty and eternal salvation inscribed in flaming characters upon the banner which waves over his head. You should swear, by the affecting charter which you received from your honored fathers in Literature, under the sacred covert of these shades, never to ground your arms, until you have made war, effective war, upon the grim and blighting prejudices which prevail so extensively in relation to this Institution; until you shall have consigned to an eternal grave that shameful effusion of

envy which has proclaimed it to be a hot bed of aristocracy and the exclusive and chosen resort of the sons of affluence.

If this charge had not derived some pretension to the character of sincerity, from the apparent integrity of the sources from which it has occasionally emanated, the calm and philosophical speculator on passing events might be induced, by its utter destitution of the semblance of truth, to consider it one of those hasty and transient effusions which are sometimes elicited by attractive displays of that power and excellence in the persons of others, which the envious beholder can never hope to reach. For if any circumstance connected with the history of this Institution be incontestibly true, it is that the wealthy have not sufficiently appreciated the precious means of instruction which have been provided at this place for the benefit of their sons, and that many of the brightest ornaments which this Seminary has year after year delivered to its country, have been those who were compelled to exert every energy which they possessed, and to adopt every honorable expedient which might enable them to complete their Collegiate course. Shame, then—an eternal and undying shame, to the charge, that this kind and beneficent refuge of all ranks and conditions in life, is the fostering nursery of aristocracy and wealth!

You should strenuously endeavor, both in the public and private walks of life, to impress upon the fathers of the land, the blissful and glorious prospects that may be revealed to the vision of their declining years, if they should send their children to be educated at this Institution. It should be your unceasing aim to inflict a fatal blow upon that current conviction, so deadly to the interests of education in this State, and which induces the father to withhold from the view of his children the advantages of a liberal education, on the principle that scholarship is an empty and insipid luxury—an useless and unpractical acquisition—a mere source of amusement, to withhold from scenes of mischief the children

of those who are gifted with unusual wealth and leisure—that a Collegiate education is totally unnecessary to qualify a person for the practical duties of life, and that a father has faithfully acquitted himself of his responsibilities to his children, when he has provided for them lands and beeves and blushing fields of grain. In a few words, you should prosecute a war of exterminating severity against that deceitful phantom, which cheats so many parents out of the best comforts of their earthly career, by inspiring the belief that Dilworth and Murray are the only accepted apostles of learning, and that the English Reader and Webster's Spelling Book are the only legitimate depositaries of the wisdom of the world—that his son is sufficiently trained for the circle of human duties, when he can write a legible copy hand, having his paper previously ruled for him—when he can spell the words *baker* and *crucifix*, with such a precise degree of accuracy as neither to add nor omit a syllable—when he can cypher with sufficient readiness to cast up all the scores on a tally of moderate length, and when he can read over a paragraph of prose, in such winning strains of melody, as to leave the hearer in doubt about which exercise he is engaged in, that of singing or reading, without being, at the same time, particularly anxious for the continuation of either entertainment.

There are a few counties in this State of high respectability, which are strongly suspected of never having yet sent a student to this University. Why this mournful apathy in regard to an object, which may involve the issues of life or of death, to the best earthly interests of individual man? This affecting circumstance has been no doubt principally occasioned by that blighting impression, which prevails to such an alarming extent among the people, that the training of a severe education is not necessary to impart to a youth, that shrewdness and tact in driving a bargain, that measure of thrift and economy in managing the common affairs of

the world, and those principles of frugality in conducting the expenditures of life, which will enable one in familiar parlance to get along well, to make a fortune, and ultimately to act a respectable and influential part upon the stage of human action. This mistake has resulted, in a considerable degree, from the misconception of examples. A few men in the course of a century, but slenderly improved by education, owing to the efficacy of natural powers of unrivalled strength combined with immense exertion, have been elevated to the highest Judicial, Executive and Legislative seats in the country—have been raised to eminence in the sphere of Medical Science, and in performing the important functions of the Pulpit and the Bar. The parsimony of the human heart, a principle already too strong and operative in its nature, is powerfully reinforced by the striking instances which have just been referred to, and a vast number of parents are delighted at thus finding a veil for avarice, in withholding from their children the advantages of instruction, whilst others are thus implicitly and fondly convinced, that their sons “can go and do likewise.”

If you can once succeed in the patriotic labor of demonstrating to the misguided parents of the country, that the instances in which untutored genius has ascended to the loftiest heights of usefulness and renown, are the beacon lights which have been scattered along the shore of human being, by the kindness of Heaven, to rescue the indigent and obscure from the waves of depression, instead of being designed to act as lures to youthful indolence or parental parsimony; if you can firmly fasten upon their minds the salutary conviction that they are under obligations to Heaven, to their country, to their children, to themselves, and to posterity, to sow the seeds of education with a liberal hand, upon the youthful intellect, instead of taxing the air, the earth, and the seas, to provide them with property; and if you can distinctly reveal to the perception of all parents, the positive

power and expansion which are usually imparted to the mind of man by a judicious system of education, the practical usefulness it is almost certain to engraft upon the person of human being, in performing the various duties of life, the solid respectability with which it clothes him as a member of society, and the prospects of high promotion which it opens upon his view, you will have succeeded in razing to the earth the most formidable battlements of ignorance, which have ever yet frowned upon the interests of education in the State of North-Carolina.

And whilst you are anxiously revolving the various objects which claim a portion of your affection and esteem, does not this Institution address a conclusive appeal to your fond and partial consideration? It has provided the chairs of Executive Magistracy, the Judicial seats and Legislative Halls, of this State, with many of their most conspicuous and endearing ornaments. Many of the Alumni of this Institution now grace the benches of judgment, the presiding chairs, and the chairs of Legislation in other States of the Confederacy. You find them in the chairs of Medical and of Academic authority, in parts of the Union, widely separated from each other, both by the pursuits of interest, and the intervention of space; and it has been remarked to the lasting honor of this Institution, that among those youths of the country who resort to the Medical Colleges of the North for instruction, but few are found who are so amply prepared for the investigation of professional science, as those who have been educated within these hallowed walls. You may repair to the Senate Hall of a Nation's deliberations, and you will find in its presiding Officer, a son of this University.— You may then pass on to the popular department of Federal Legislation, and on turning your vision in the direction of the Speaker's Chair, you will observe the delicate and important functions of that commanding station, performed by a graduate of this University. On glancing over the Con-

gressional rolls of many of the States, you will recognize the names of persons who slaked their youthful thirst for knowledge, at this ever flowing and ever refreshing fountain of intelligence. You have seen one of the noblest sons of this Institution sink like a starry sphere beneath the horizon, while worshipping the Muse of History, with the impassioned glow of a Pilgrim's devotion. You have beheld another son of this University, by the multitude and rapid succession of his triumphs upon the surface of the seas, communicating dismay and dismal apprehensions of ruin to the heart of Britain's proud and celebrated domain, and you behold two of the sons of this Institution, arrayed in the most honored robes of authority, which the Church in this country can confer.

A scene of the most affecting interest is said to have once occurred in the Capitol of the nation, which strongly illustrates the efficacy of that system of instruction and discipline which is practiced here—a scene which was, on a former occasion, delineated by the sainted patriot who once presided over the destinies of this University, with all that fervor of feeling and energy of language which so remarkably characterized him. Being once on a visit to the National Seat of Government, and quickly surrounded by many of his former pupils, whose attention had been forcibly engaged by the appearance of his venerable form, he remarked, whilst his heart was overflowing with ecstatic sensibility, and his eyes streaming with the most touching evidences of human emotion, that he felt as if he had been then standing amid the familiar scenes of Chapel-Hill. If you should require some proof of the claims of this place to your reverential homage and affectionate regard, which would be more touching in its nature, you must seek it, Gentlemen, from some person more minutely versed in the incidents of past time, than he who is now honored by your presence.

And permit me, whilst invoking your peculiar care and

consideration in behalf of other objects which are of lasting importance to the best interests of social man, to solicit a portion of your sincerest sympathies for the two Literary Societies which are connected with our University. Almost coeval with the birth of the Institution itself, and established and perpetuated by the generous ardour of youth, for the noblest purposes which may occupy the mind or animate the bosom of man, the renovating influence of these interesting Associations, like refreshing dew, is felt and perceived in the vivid hues which it constantly imparts to the moral and intellectual interests of the State. We recognize the benefits which flow from their existence, in the creation of ties of friendship, which are only dissolved by the rapacious and unsparing tyrant of the grave; in those sentiments of punctilious honor and of delicate morality, which are instinctively startled by the slightest breeze of suspicion, and which cause the bosom of their possessor to glow like a furnace at the slightest breach of the code of moral propriety; in a feeling of tender compassion and benevolence to the whole human race, which is revolted by the faintest approach to rudeness or to cruelty; in a feeling of enthusiastic devotion to the interests and institutions of the country, which brands with deep and explicit condemnation every stab which may be offered to the prosperity or glory of the nation; and in the eloquence and manly energy of style, which often distinguish both the oral and written productions of those who have participated in the advantages here enjoyed.

These Societies, through every period in the history of the Institution, have nerved the arm of Collegiate authority, by a nice adaptation of their respective systems of government to the preservation of decorum, regularity and order. They have almost invariably punished every flagrant breach of the principles of honor or morality, by a prompt expulsion of the offender from the circle of their privileges. They have generally

visited with censure those who might offer any palpable blow to the government of the Institution. They have collected Libraries, which, from the splendid appearance, solid value and extended number of the volumes which they contain, not only constitute a precious and impressive ornament to the character of North-Carolina, but which would be calculated to adorn any Literary Chamber within the bounds of the Union. And let it be recorded to their immortal praise, that they have aided some of the most promising sons of this State in the sacred work of procuring a finished education. Yes, if these Societies were suddenly obliterated from the system of our University, the mournful event would prove as disastrous to its future hopes and prospects, as would the severance of a left arm or the extinction of a left eye to the functions of the human frame. It might possibly progress in its operations for the accomplishment of good to the public, without the additional strength which is now derived from their co-operation, but it would be in a comparatively dull and spiritless manner.

Does it not, then, become you—is it not a duty imperative upon you, to cheer, by your annual presence here, those who represent yourselves and your early associates in the halls of these Societies? Where can you find a nobler and more delectable task, than that of illuminating the younger members of these bodies, by the counsels of your more matured and enlarged experience? You might also materially enhance the efficacy and strength of their laudable efforts to increase the intellectual resources of the State, by occasional contributions of rare minerals and other natural curiosities, by depositing in their halls remarkable works of art, and precious productions in literature. These evidences of your regard would invigorate and sustain them in all their noble and spirited purposes, by impressing upon their minds the encouraging conviction, that though they are hidden from the gaze of the world in their silent labors for the good of their

country, instead of having faded from the remembrance of their elder brethren, they still enjoy in their affectionate recollection a fond and welcome abode.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENIOR CLASS:

You are now about to emerge from the quiet shades in which you have enjoyed many of the most blissful moments of your earthly career, and to enter upon the duties and responsibilities of a chequered and untried scene; and it is a matter of infinite moment to your future happiness in life, that your first decisions of conduct should be correct, for if you should unfortunately err at the start in choosing your principles of action, or in your view of those means which are essential to success, the whole current of your existence will be apt to flow in a rugged channel. There is no one error which you should more cautiously shun than that prevailing taste for splendour in Literary performances, with which the mind of man is so apt to become imbued in early life.

A French writer of eminence has closed a long enumeration of Sir Isaac Newton's virtues and attainments, by observing "that he was not distinguished from other men of his time by any singularity, either natural or affected." That illustrious apostle of science was certainly never possessed with that baneful passion for display and tawdriness in the creations of his mind, which mark the spirit of the present age to such an alarming extent. He cultivated simplicity, solidity and strength in all his beneficent labors, and in this respect he will constitute a model upon which your judgments may securely repose, in preparing yourselves for the stern duties and realities of life.

The fondness for show is particularly disastrous in the influence which it exerts on the business pursuits of life. Most beginners in the world set out with the delusive belief, that elegant language is the chief instrument of success in every

human enterprize. They seem to have entirely overlooked the important fact, that sound ideas are the sinews of strength in every intellectual production, and that early habits of labor and industry are the grand essentials to an accurate and punctual performance of the duties and business which usually devolve upon individual man. They consequently worship the pages of fiction and of poesy with a feeling of impassioned devotion, and garner up, with solicitous care, all the fine figures and brilliant passages which are scattered over the pages of the most florid writer. And it is not until the journey of life is far advanced, that the misguided student is brought to the mournful discovery, that a pompous and swelling style, either in writing or speaking, is utterly useless in performing any grave or important duty, without the more solid accompaniment of sound views, and the benefit which may be derived from a previous discipline of the faculties. He then perceives with unavailing sadness of heart, that these empty and deceitful accomplishments are similar to those flowery vales and fragrant bowers, through which we pass without bringing any thing away, except a sense of the sweet odours which were profusely circulating around us.

How prevalent is the impression among the Students of our Universities, that the Father of his Country was not endowed with a fertile genius, because he left no fanciful speeches, nor highly colored orations, as a legacy to his countrymen. They forget that the actions of a rational being in a responsible and difficult sphere of conduct, attest the strength of his intellect much more effectually than either his writings or speeches. They forget that speeches are only intended to enlighten the judgment of others, in regard to the proper plans of action which ought to be pursued in the various undertakings of men, and to point out the means necessary to carry those plans into effect. They appear to have forgotten, too, that President Washington never erred in forming his plans of action, nor in the choice of the

instruments which were requisite to their proper execution; that he was the Pharos by which the American Congress was guided in its portentous deliberations and decisions, through the whole space of time which was occupied by the Revolution; that when he was a member of the Convention which met in 1788, to frame a Constitution for this Country, he frequently put to flight a host of prolix speakers, and destroyed the effect of a score of long speeches, by a few pertinent and well timed remarks, which were sure to embrace the strong point of the subject under discussion. They seem not to recollect that Napoleon Bonaparte, though he was the animating soul of all the Revolutions which convulsed the Nations of Europe during his eventful era, never distinguished himself, either by the protracted length of his speeches, or by the splendour of his style. They appear also to have lost sight of the fact, that the celebrated Doctor Franklin, notwithstanding he raised the character of his country to such an exalted height, by his researches and discoveries in Science, and engaged the admiration and affections of the whole French Nation, while Minister at the elegant and polished Court of France, acquired not his reputation by flights of oratory, nor by the brighter graces of composition. No, these immortal geniuses were enabled to render such signal services to their species and their country, by the vigor of their judgments, by their good sense and practical habits of business, qualities for which they were much indebted to severe mental discipline. They acted upon the sound conclusion, that a florid style in speaking and writing

“like expanded gold.

Exchanges solid strength for feeble splendour.”

He is indeed a fortunate student of the Law, who does not imbibe the impression at an early period of his career, that nothing more is essential to his success at the Bar than eloquent and touching appeals addressed to the passions of the Jury; for the votary of that honorable profession seems very

frequently to be ignorant of the fact, that there is an immense mass of business to be performed at the bar, which requires a previous seasoning to general labor, especially a previous training for the drudgeries of the Law itself. He seems not to know that a vast number of cases are constantly arising, which involve the most complex principles, and which require a laborious and painful investigation of Legal Science, in order to their correct and judicious management. He is unconscious, before he has been intensely mortified by palpable failures in the practice of his profession, that speaking constitutes but a small portion of the labor to be undergone in the Courts of Justice, and that a Lawyer would be laughed to scorn for attempting a long and florid harangue in those instances in which the most intricate questions are to be discussed and explained.

To this impression, that flower and fancy constitute the sole excellence in the business of speaking, may be safely ascribed many of those frothy productions that are frequently thrown off before our political meetings and annual celebrations, which are admired by all and comprehended by none. And though you should by no means neglect the legitimate ornaments of style, you ought carefully to guard against a surrender of your whole heart to these alluring accomplishments. You should regard them only as secondary considerations, when compared with acuteness and strength of judgment—with sound learning and practical energy of character, in performing the business of life. Bacon discoursed like an Angel, yet from the want of prudence, experience and practiced wisdom, in managing what are usually denominated common affairs, he acted with the folly and imbecility of childhood. The second Charles of England was characterised as a person

Who never said a foolish thing

And never did a wise one,

and Sheridan, one of the fairest boasts of Britain's eloquence, from a similar defect of character, slid into embarrass-

ments and difficulties, which often exposed him to the contempt of the world, and covered his old age with the sable vesture of sorrow. You should guard with jealous caution, against this perilous quicksand, by training yourselves in common business, as well as in the knowledge of books, by choosing for your guide, those models which may be recommended to your consideration, by a union of practical energy with eloquence and erudition. You should meet with fearless resolution, all the impediments which may beset and perplex your course. You should take pleasure in encountering the manual drudgeries, as well as the intellectual exertions which may be incident to the vocation you may select in life. You should be careful, above all things, to perform every duty in its proper time and place, and universally act upon the maxim, "*labor vincet omnia*," taking for your motto the maxim of an illustrious ornament of Britain, "that whatsoever man has once accomplished, man may accomplish again."

Whilst I am soliciting a portion of your attention for other matters of infinite moment to your future comfort and honor, permit me to warn you with the earnest solicitude of a true friend, against the most distant approaches of one fatal passion which now bestrides every cherished pursuit of this country, with a grasp as relentless as that of the tyrant of the grave, and with a power of injury as deadly as the exhalations of the Upas. I refer to that universal appetite for political promotion, which is now seizing within its mortal clutches, every age, rank and condition of life.—Against the entrance of this insidious and perilous propensity, you should guard every passage to the heart, with the same distrustful vigilance which you would exert, in repelling a viper from your bosoms; for vain will be the attempt to reach a permanent professional renown, whilst the springs of action are influenced by this fell mania. Every such attempt will prove as vain as an effort to rise above the stars with the aid of a feeble wing; for there is no maxim of inspired

wisdom, that has ever yet entered the world, more obstinately true, than that which declares, "that where the treasure is, there will the heart be." If then, the young mind is once infected with the baneful delusion, that the spring of man's best comforts and hopes arises within the tumultuous arena of political contention, all the sober pursuits of life will at once assume a sable and repulsive hue; the sinews of exertion will be relaxed or severed, and the usual instruments of success, and the sanctioned sources of instruction will be contemptuously thrown aside. The more especially does this burning passion for politics weaken the energy, and chill the professional ardor of the young votary of the Law, for when he once contracts a thirst for that boisterous but transient notoriety which frequently follows the professed politician, he becomes wearied with the calm researches of Science, proscribes the pages of Coke and of Blackstone, and gives his days and nights to the Register of Debates, pants "to read his history in a Nation's eye," resigns his heart to the people, and solicits some political post at their disposal. And should his wishes be crowned with success, what then? Why, his next aspiration is, to acquire extended celebrity, by some striking display of eloquence in the councils of his Country. If his ambition is gratified in this aspiration also, we may then be prepared to bid a long, and perhaps an eternal farewell, to every rational prospect of professional eminence and utility. For that youthful student must be composed of stern and inflexible materials, who is willing to return again to the dusty labors of the closet, and to gather renown at the slow pace of the bar, after he has been once carressed and applauded by the most distinguished men of the nation, after he has been prodigally flattered by the people of a district, and enjoyed a succession of brilliant notices in the most popular journals of the day, for perhaps one brief effort which cost but a few moments of deliberation, and the easy labor of garnishing anew a few ideas extracted from the

political text books of his party. For he quickly institutes a comparison between political and forensic reputation. The one is earned with facility and despatch, is brisk and animated whilst it does endure, and is sure to expand the heart of its possessor with false conceptions of his own importance; the other is the reward of diligent research and persevering study, and though solid and durable, when it arrives, is so silent in its progress, as rarely to reveal its approaches by a sudden introduction to a wide circle of attention.

By a premature participation in the charms of political fame, many of the most captivating prospects of renown and usefulness, which have ever dawned upon the vision of man, have been mournfully disappointed, and many of the noblest minds which illumine the halls of Federal wisdom, have fallen short of that sterling power and influence, in the public Councils, which a rich store of learning and acumen combined with unfailing dexterity in debate, is sure to impart to those who have been previously trained in the contentions of the bar. It should be the first object of every generous youth, who aspires to solid and imperishable fame, to amass an extensive stock of professional knowledge and experience, to settle the habits of life upon a firm and immovable basis, to draw largely from the most approved fountains of intellectual light, and to rear upon the foundation of these attainments, a durable and commanding structure of reputation, anterior to his entrance upon the broad stage of political strife. The excellence thus acquired, like the rod of the prophet, will cause refreshing fountains to arise, and fragrant blossoms to expand, and generous fruits to grow upon the desert wastes of human life, whilst the intoxicating draught of political notoriety, like a delirious vision, yields

“ a frothy joy,
Which mantles high, sparkles and expires,
Leaving the soul more vapid than before.”

But apart from the capacity for rendering important services to his country, and the ability to contend with its most gifted men, which will enhance the value of his faculties, who has been strengthened by the exercises of the bar, his character will receive a fresh hue to its attractions and splendour, from the influence of his political acquisitions. And a person thus situated, may divest himself of his political predilections with as much ease as he can part with his cloak after having emerged from a passing shower, and return with fresh alacrity and confidence to the path of forensic pursuits. But if professional acquirements shall have been neglected previous to an entrance into political strife, these prolific sources of power and wealth will probably be forever deserted. For it is the peculiar nature of political duties and engagements, to relax the usual discipline of the mind, to disorder its habits, to weaken its energies, and to inspire an invincible disrelish for the minute researches and jejune labors of the Law, and for every other duty which requires much severity of thought. If, under these circumstances, a person should be compelled to abandon the exciting incidents of the public scene, either by the decision of the popular voice or by the claims of domestic duty, he is apt, in the future stages of his life, to be afflicted with that hopeless spirit of despondency which will chiefly result from the absence of congenial employments. From this sad incumbrance upon his happiness, no accession which has been added to his fame, no matter how splendid, will certainly deliver him, for he has deserted public life, and is consequently bereaved of that measure of artificial excitement with which it constantly buoyed up his feelings. He is not able to seek comfort in the engagements of the Bar, for he will have lost both his relish for such exercises and his ability to perform them. And he is totally unfitted for the extraction of comfort from the private sources of human entertainment, for they will appear vapid to his taste and loathsome to his feelings.

This will be the inevitable condition of that individual who has not secured a liberal supply of legal knowledge previous to his entrance upon the stage of public life.

But this keen pursuit of the imagined felicities and prospects of the political scene, is not injurious to the interests of individuals alone. It lies at the root of our national strength like a canker at the root of the rosebud. It disturbs the stream of the public health and happiness in its fountain springs. For the youth, who are sent to the Colleges and Schools of the country, will be quickly tempted by a perception of that universal weight and consideration which spring from political popularity and influence, to grow restless under that wholesome discipline which is imposed by scholastic authority, and to resign the most precious moments of their College career to the showy but ephemeral productions which frequently emanate from the Halls of Legislation.

A blight of incurable inefficiency will thus descend upon the whole surface of human pursuits. The charms of positive virtue will be diminished, in consequence of the public mind being seized with a false conception and with a false estimation of the true accomplishments of man. For while the national taste is vitiated by a principle of wild and unregulated devotion to the means of political aggrandizement, the citizen will not be valued for the solid splendour of his productions in literature, for the depth and diversity of his attainments in learning, for the brilliancy of his discoveries in general science, for his beneficent inventions in the sphere of mechanical ingenuity, for that profound penetration into the sources of agricultural wealth, which will enable him to abridge the labors and multiply the productions of the farmer, nor for the bright exemplification of the whole catalogue of moral virtues. No: these grand ingredients in the sum of human happiness will appear as light as the down on a linnet's wing, when compared with commanding popularity and flowing and pompous harangues in Con-

gress—the one of which creations may be indebted for its birth to a superior capacity for practising the arts of deception, and the other to the redundant flowings of a wild and undisciplined fancy.

If you are anxious to realize the tendency of this despotic passion to absorb every other consideration in life, watch the road which leads to your political Metropolis whilst the Legislature is in session, and observe how it will be thronged with passengers of every grade of fortune and of every shade of character, who are eagerly wending their way to this focus of all eyes, of all hearts, and as many would have it, of all wisdom. Mark the keen anxiety which pervades every circle in society, when the result of a political election is about to be made known; and observe the course of conversation in every group of persons in which you may chance to enter, and see if it does not, in its various alternations and changes, fix at last upon the party politics of the country. The perpetual topics of discussion with men of all professions, during their intervals of leisure, are the prospects which indicate the downfall of one Administration and the elevation of another upon its ruins; the symptoms which flatter one candidate for Congress with the hopes of success, and menace another with the terrors of defeat; or the influence which an election in some particular State will exert over the fortunes and destinies of an aspirant to the Presidency of the Union.

Every unfledged nestling in politics turns with an eye of solicitation to a seat in the State Legislature. Every politician of mature age, whose character is not in a positive degree insufferable, is looking forward with tremulous eagerness, to a place in the Hall of National Representatives, to a situation in one of the Cabinet departments, or in the Diplomatic service of the Country. Every decent citizen is panting for some post of public preferment and profit, and those who have not been sufficiently fortunate to obtain any other *post*, are *posting* their way with a provident share of

speed, to the Republic of Texas. Politics, indeed, appear to swallow every other interest, and the whole surface of the Earth seems to be covered with Politicians, as Egypt once swarmed with locusts. Very few seem to rely for respectability and happiness, upon the certainty of filling up the measure of their social and domestic duties. Very few appear to take refuge for consolation and support, in the agricultural and professional pursuits of Society. All are devoutly participating in politics, without taking time to consider, that this is an appetite "which grows on what it feeds," that when a person once becomes delighted with that violent sort of excitement which springs from scenes of agitation and contention, it becomes as essential to his happiness, as is respiration to the functions of life, that the time will necessarily arrive, when this passion must yield to the claims of business, of family, or of advanced age, and that then a painful void will be experienced, which nothing beneath the skies can fill. The soothing endearments of kindred affection, the balmy counsels of true friendship, and the sacred ministrations of genuine virtue, will all glanee from his estranged heart, without leaving even a transient impression behind them, and instead of reaching an age of soft and serene repose, his declining years will cover a dreary and unproductive space. It is natural too, that he who has drawn his best enjoyments from troubled fountains, and from violent sensations, should be feebly moved by the tranquil sources of human delight and happiness. It is reasonable to believe, that the tender notes of friendship will fall unheeded upon that ear, which has long been accustomed to the din of the Court-yard and of the Muster-field, to the boisterous discussions of the Hall of Legislation, and which has been wont to drink in no blissful music, but the shout of victory at the close of a successful campaign. Indeed, it would be as unnatural to expect such an individual, to reap satisfaction from the smooth and quiet pleasures of private life, as it would be to antici-

pate pleasure for the habitual resident of a Courtly atmosphere, when suddenly enclosed in the cave of a hermit.

This consuming rage for political promotion has its origin then, in the circumstance of looking upon power and station as the only objects beneath the circuit of the sun, which are worthy of a place in the fond regard of man. It has its origin in the same principle we are habitually prone to condemn so unsparingly in the governments of the elder world. Yes, we may decry the people of France and of England, on account of their fondness for pageantry and titles, as liberally as we may choose; but this is a passion which burns with as intense fury in the American bosom, as it does in the bosoms of any other rational beings on the surface of the globe. The passion for titles may be concealed on this side of the Atlantic, under the mask of a different form; but it nevertheless does exist in the fullness of its vigor. It is but the blossom, too, of that appendage to a monarchical government, which, of all others, is least congenial to the simple tastes and affections which are the life of a Republic; and unless it should be speedily restrained in its march to uncontrolled ascendancy, by the saving spirit of reform, which originally gave life to our system, it will ultimately ripen into an aristocracy as ponderous and unwieldy as that of Britain.

This passion, too, instead of abating in its force and fervor, is growing like an insinuating and fatal epidemic, and as a necessary concomitant of power and place, it has inspired our people with an ardent thirst for show, pageantry and ostentation. It is as natural that these disastrous results should flow from such a pernicious source, as it is that the leaves should be unfolded by the genial warmth of Spring. Thus a spirit of extravagance is engendered, fortunes are squandered, characters are impaired and ruined, and the primitive tastes and habits of the people will be most sadly corrupted. Is it to be expected, that the American principles alone are composed of such a stern material as to resist and war-off the

corrupting influence of this alarming and destructive passion? Some of the fairest, most splendid and happily constructed governments of antiquity, have crumbled and perished beneath the incumbent weight of some pernicious propensity. The Lacedemonian Republic was destroyed by the introduction of overflowing wealth, combined with its consequent fruit, an inordinate lust of gain. The Athenian Republic perished by the united force and influence of the fondness of the people for luxury, and their insatiable thirst for Theatrical amusements. And the Roman Republic was consigned to destruction by that universal popular debasement, which flowed from the prevalence of luxury and sloth among the people. May it not be the sad misfortune of the future historian, to record the mournful fact, that the exciting hopes of this Republic were crushed in the embrace of that fell scourge, political ambition!

But there is another mournful evil which flows from this propensity, the continual strife of parties for the ascendancy in matters of government. There is no public vice which scatters in its train a more desolating tribe of evils, than this. By its baneful influence and operations, the tears of widowhood and of orphanage are caused to flow in torrents for the shed blood of those public men who fall in single combat, for some transient spark of irritation, struck out by the momentary heat of discussion. The complexion of all the private relations of life, is frequently changed entirely; fathers are alienated from sons; brothers are torn from each other's fond embrace; friends are converted into implacable enemies; large towns and extensive neighborhoods are thrown into a state of sad and insufferable confusion; our annual elections, which were intended to cleanse the springs of political authority from the dregs of abuse, are converted into theatres of angry contention and disgraceful confusion, of sanguine conflicts between man and man, and between party and party; the hall of Legislation is frequently a

theatre of disgraceful scrambles for victory; public measures are viewed through a distorted medium, and their excellence is estimated, and consequently their ultimate fate decided, not according to the measure of good which they are calculated to render to the country, but by the nature of the source from which they happen to spring. Can it be rationally presumed that any country will enjoy an expanded and healthful degree of prosperity, the sweets of an unmolested repose, or a permanent stability of character and purpose, when the laws which are passed for the preservation of life and property, and for the control and guidance of the conduct of man, are adopted upon the arbitrary dictates of party feeling, and when those upon whose decision are suspended the destinies of the Republic, are chosen, not upon the high considerations of integrity, ability and patriotism, but upon the ground of absolute and uncompromising devotion to the interests of a particular party. When this most baneful evil is so prevalent in the community, the vilest miscreant may sneak into power, and deliver to the country those rules which are to bind the action of the present generation, and of posterity.

And even should good and pure men be elected to fill the highest seats of legislative responsibility in despite of the ruthless dictation of the spirit of party, yet we are not provided even then with any prevailing pledge, any satisfactory assurance, that the measures they adopt will be salutary and beneficent in their character; for good men are susceptible of the same transient impulses of passion and prejudice which invade the bosoms of others. And when influenced by the spirit of party, they may be so completely infatuated, as to believe that they are exerting their powers in the service of their country, when they are executing the most debasing requisitions of their party. They may elect incompetent and worthless men to administer the justice of the country, for the purpose of giving an ostensible demonstration to the world, of their ascendancy; and they

may likewise pass unwholesome and pernicious laws; laws which will poison the fountain of justice, and paralyse the rights of the citizen, merely because they originate with their party. Every Presidential Election which passes over the country, is certain to shake the fabric of our Union from its centre, to its remotest extremities. Every aspirant after popular favor, when the election has terminated adversely to his wishes, is almost certain to prefer the charge of corruption against his more successful rival. The most indifferent and praiseworthy acts of the public man are frequently ascribed by an opposing party, to bad and unworthy motives; and opprobrium and censure, being thus indiscriminately applied on all occasions to good and innocent deeds, as well as to those which are base and pernicious, will cease to grate harshly upon the public ear, will totally lose their significance and their terrors, and when bad deeds are actually committed, there will be no sting and no pang imparted to the authors of them, by the just and honest censures of the public.

This spirit of party, however it may be disguised under the name of public spirit, is nothing else than the lust of individual domination. In seeking the gratification of individual prejudices, and the promotion of individual aspirations, it has covered with undeserved obloquy, some of the most illustrious benefactors of the human race. Through the influence of faction, the immortal Duke of Marlboro' was reduced to the most abject disgrace, after he had raised the character of his country to a pitch of unexampled glory. Thro' the influence of party spirit, in the councils of Carthage, Hannibal was prevented, immediately after the overwhelming success of *Cannæ*, from receiving those supplies of men and treasure, which would have closed, speedily and forever, the career of Roman power; and this circumstance caused the shades of night to veil forever the destinies of Carthage.

It has been predicted by a deep searcher into the sources of

political events, and revolutions, that if England should ever be deprived of her liberty and power, the mournful disaster will result from the prevalence of faction in her councils.— And if the same penetrating writer were now upon the shore of human existence, he might predict with equal confidence, perhaps, that should this country, the scene of the sweetest visions, and brightest realities of public freedom, ever fade from the map of Republics, she will owe the melancholy catastrophe to the spirit of party.

Whilst this desolating infatuation prevails in our country, the spirit of patriotism will be a stranger in the land, and all the blissful hopes, and transporting anticipations, which clustered around the cradle of our Government, and which have lingered upon its progress from infancy to maturity, will be obscured by the disastrous mists of twilight.

Whilst this grim harbinger of the sorrows of futurity stands by the spring of our National glory and happiness, to cast the roots of bitterness into its waters, the stream of our political comforts will flow in a mingled current.

Whilst this Angel of destruction hovers over the citadel of our national strength, the silver trumpet of American renown will bear a mingled strain to the world. Sever this passion for political power at its root, and it will be as natural for this baleful enemy of our public and social peace to perish, as it is for the blossoms to fall, and the leaves to wither, after the axe has been applied to the root of the parent tree. In the holy enterprize of relieving your country from a despotism, as pernicious and intolerant as any which blooms and strengthens beneath the genial influences of an oriental sky, you will be cheered by the smiles, honored by the blessings, and invigorated by the prayers of those fair and ethereal comforters, by whose inciting presence we are now honored; those who are earliest at the cradle of patriotism, and who linger latest at its grave: those who, by their magic powers of inspiration, kindled afresh the expiring flame of

patriotism in the darkest periods of the Revolution ; those for whose preservation the pure and heroic bosom would be willing to revolutionize the world. Perform your part in consummating this divine achievement, and the blessings of the patriot will gild the path of your journey through life, and the tears of the patriot will descend upon your tombs forever !









